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ABSTRACT

As trained counselors, career educators, and career education guidance and counseling programs have become increasingly available, there has been a tendency for the church to lose the perspective of its role in preparing people, particularly the young, for purposeful and satisfying lives. A church-based career development program would provide resources and experiences which would enable each individual to assess and appraise his/her own abilities and develop and maintain a sense of purpose, a calling that is personally his/hers. Church-sponsored career education programs might include youth drug community counseling; adult alcohol community counseling; emergency family assistance center; career seminars; parent discussion groups; daily preparation for job environment; and being a witnessing Christian on the job. Genuine spiritual revival must await the rediscovery of the Christian significance of daily work, and the church can lead the challenge. (BL)

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CAREER EDUCATION THROUGH THE CHURCH

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"There is But One Vocation For a Christian: Discipleship in All That We Do"

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I. INTRODUCTION

Career, in the context of this paper, is meant to include a sequence of positions occupied by a person as he/she progresses through life. Occupying a position involves meeting the role expectations that are associated in the mind of the occupant and in the minds of those whom they encounter with that position (Super, 1971, p.15).

Education is the rubric under which our schools, business, industry, the home and the church meet their responsibility to assist the individual in the preparation, entry, and progression in all life roles.

The development of our nation's human resources through education for their planned or assumed life roles is not only a critical element in the future strength of this country, but also a biblical charge handed down to all of us in the New Testament. Embedded into the development and learning of skills and knowledge for use in the work, education, community, family, and leisure worlds must be a system of values by which ultimate decisions are made and choices evaluated. Besides being enabled to see the social contribution of life, each individual must, above all, come to recognize that what a person does derives from what a person is (Bauer, 1976).

Numerous Christian leaders, e.g., Luther, Calvin, Eastwood, etc., agree that the Bible is extremely clear on the point that there is only one "divine vocation" for all Christians, to be exercised in various spheres of life. As convinced Christians, we cannot tolerate a split personality idea in our lives. We need to express ourselves in the totality of our Christian life, in service to others, where we are, in whatever we do. As Christian educational leaders believing that our vocational commitment to Christ involves all living, which could result in the enlarging and enrichment of our "whole" life, we bring a necessary and unique perspective to the

topic *Career Education Through the Church.* This means that our earthly priesthood is not exercised by folding hands in anticipation of heaven, but demonstrated through witness, example, teaching, counseling, mission, and service (Feucht, 1974).

All too often there seems to be the belief that God's business happens in and around the church and that we leave the career life role of deciding, planning, preparation, transition, coping adjustment, etc., to educational, governmental, or social agencies.

Paralleling the misconceptions of the work of the church is a corresponding notion that the real influence of the church in the world is institutional. . .Neither the influence of council or clergy nor the influence of church boards or administrators is her power index. . .God's method is persons, not machinery. . .They are there, everyday, quietly invading their world for Christ, beachheads of the kingdom, in business, education, government, labor, and the professions established by regenerated persons doing their job daily to the glory of God as servants of Jesus Christ. This is the work of the church (Halverson, 1960). Lay people and they alone, in their daily lives and occupations, encounter the society in which they live (Kraemer, 1958). We, as Christian educators, form, in a very particular way, the spearhead and context of the church's role and responsibilities of assisting in the career development of our nation's youth and adults.

In summary there is only one vocation or calling for all Christians in the situation where we live, and that is "discipleship," --to be a Christ to one's neighbor.

Let me now come to the implementation issue of the paper and speak directly to how the church can play a primary role in preparing the young, mid-life, and retirement concerned adult for purposeful and satisfying lives. This discussion will make it very clear that the choice of occupation is within the choice of vocation (discipleship) of your commitment--not all of it. Your choice of an occupation should be within your choice of vocation, of a sense of purpose, of a calling that is personally yours. What satisfaction do you want from life? What contributions do you want to make? What do you want to be, with honor to yourself, your neighbors, and your God? Life with the Christ-directed focus can provide daily satisfaction and life-long celebration. Kahlil Gibran, the immortal Arab poet, (wrote in "Work is Love Made Visible") summarizes the principle well "if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half a man's hunger" (Schwarzrock, 1972).

II. THE CHURCH-CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED EDUCATION: A DEFINITION

Let's first of all look at what is considered to be (1) the mission and function of the Christian church, and (2) the goals and expectations of career education.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT)

Recognizing our unity in Christ and our common practice in the Christian faith; desiring to express our fellowship in worship and work; knowing our spiritual needs, mindful of our Christian privileges and duties; and wishing to observe orderly cooperation a church must attempt to meet the life role needs of each individual through such ministries as:

1. *Proclamation:* The telling of both individuals and groups the good news of Jesus Christ, any place, any time.
2. *Teaching:* Presentation, didactic and sometimes controversial, of Christ's word, its meaning, and its potential for life role fulfillment.
3. *Worship:* Gathering of Christians for hearing the gospel, prayer, praise, and recommitment in church, home and community settings.
4. *Fellowship:* Those actions or relationships of two persons or more who unite and believe in the family of Christ.
5. *Witness:* The personal testimony by individuals that provides insights to the meaning of Jesus Christ in their own lives and the promise it holds for others.
6. *Service:* All Christians are to gird themselves for service to others. "What you have done to the least of these my brethren you have done unto me " (Matthew 25).

These six functions of a Christian church involve all beliefs and lay claim to a Christian's whole life. All believers can prepare and implement their personal roles in the following suggested ways:

1. Personal relationships,
2. Their family unit,
3. Their congregation,
4. The community as a whole,
5. Work (paid or unpaid),
6. The civic-political dimensions of their life.

CAREER FOCUSED LIFE EDUCATION

A model and related mission of career development-focused educational programs focus upon one's understanding through self and interpersonal relationships, life role planning, experiencing and decision-making, and the transition to, and maintenance of one's chosen life roles. The following are introductory definitions of these career development domains, *Life Role Development Model,* 1976.

- *Self and Interpersonal Relations Domain*

The self and interpersonal relationships domain is characterized by the affirmation of personal characteristics, integration of values into meaningful development for behavior patterns, and responsible application of knowledge of interpersonal relationships.

- *Career Planning and Decision-Making Domain*

The career planning and decision-making domain *includes goals for individual development leading to the successful assumption of various life roles. This development is reflected in the ability to enter into a role and maintain or advance within that role based upon self-determination.* The decision-making process is personalized through the application of individual goals and values. The development of skills necessary to gather, organize, and evaluate information for decision-making is the foundation of career planning.

The career planning process enables individuals to evaluate their career decisions as they relate to their personal values and to accept the responsibility for their decisions. In the career planning process, individuals build upon past experiences and use various resources and experiences to understand career planning as an ongoing process reflecting continuous learning and changing environmental factors. As a result of effective decision-making, individuals affirm their potential for expanding their life role options.

•*Life Role Assumption Domain*

The life role domain focuses on the *interrelatedness of various aspects of one's career, emphasizing the work and leisure roles.* The acquisition of *knowledge, attitudes,* and *skills pertaining to roles in home, school, and community life is emphasized.* The life role domain advances understandings of the *world of work, leisure, and economics that are integral to life style selection.*

III. THE CHURCH--ITS ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES

In an attempt to provide ideas on how the church, through its parish structural organization and its pastoral and member stewardship manpower, can provide a Christian perspecive toward one's career development, the following career development goals and associated techniques are offered.

CHURCH BASED CAREER DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR CONSIDERATION

The church will provide Christian based resources and experiences which will enable each individual to:

- •Assess the relationships of interest, values, abilities, and experiences in relationship to projective life role.
- •Appraise and appreciate their physical, emotional, and intellectual characteristics and utilize this knowledge in future life role goal setting.
- •Accept themselves and others as unique children of God, and integrate this appreciation into daily environmental interactions.
- •Characterize their personal value and attitude system in relationship to the single vocation principle in life of discipleship.
- •Assess the impact of social relationships within the home, school, work, and community settings.
- •Become tolerant in interpersonal relationships with others who have differing attitudes, beliefs, and understandings.
- •Cope and adjust to the various settings and situations that occur in our daily lives.
- •Develop the necessary decision making skills for effective life role planning especially related to the discipleship vocation.
- •Develop increased skill and sensitivity towards analyzing their personal and social goals and values in relationship to those taught us by Jesus Christ through the church.
- •Affirm their personal potential for expanding their discipleship vocation in the various life roles that one is involved in or being considered.
- •Evaluate career decisions that have been made in relationship to those Christian based expectations taught to us through the Bible.
- •Accept the responsibility of preaching, teaching, and living out the Christian discipleship vocation to our fullest potential.
- •Analyze the ways in which work (paid or unpaid) provides satisfaction related to our individual goal and needs and the
- •Assess the characteristics (pros-cons), qualifications, stages of preparation needed to obtain and perform various preferred discipleship, work, leisure, and community leadership roles.

broader functions of our society.

- •Evaluate the relationship of what we want to become to the economics (present and future) that will impact on this aspiration.
- •Assess a variety of ways in which our personal needs for discipleship can be achieved within our work and community participation.
- •Affirm that there are numerous physical and emotional needs that can be met through carefully selected leisure activities.
- •Assess what would be a balanced relationship between our involvement in leisure, educational, and work pursuits so that our primary roles of discipleship and family leadership can maintain a priority status.

CHURCH SPONSORED CAREER EDUCATION TECHNIQUES

Youth Drug Community Counseling--(drug and alcohol related)

To provide a Christ-focused answer to the problems of our troubled youth, the church could provide a most valuable community service in the area of youth users of drugs and alcohol. This type of service should be dedicated to presenting the Christian faith and Christian life style as viable alternatives to involvement in the drug culture.

Counseling could be provided in several ways: (l) home counseling, (2) school counseling in cooperation with school couselors, (3) church (a separate) center, (4) use of radio and television, and (5) use of trained lay counselor staffed telephone hot line.

Adult Alcohol Community Counseling

In every city there are many homeless men and women who are troubled because of the use of alcohol. The local church should reach out with its homes, food, financial support, teaching, and preaching. Individually and through working with appropriate city agencies, realizing that Jesus Christ is the only true answer to the problem, we need to provide food for their hearts as well as their stomachs.

Inmate Outreach

All too often the church and its membership forget very quickly the love and spiritual needs of those who have been imprisoned. The form of inmate outreach could take numerous forms as follows:

1. Peer counseling
2. Parole transition assistance
3. Letter writing
4. Visitations in prison
5. Assistance with educational concerns
6. Spiritual assistance--Bible study, etc.
7. Helping renew the libraries with numerous materials, including appropriate Christian materials
8. Instruction (vocational and avocational needs)
9. Testing, interest inventory administration and interpretation counseling.

Matthew 25: 36 and 40--"I was in prison and you came to me. . . .as you did it to me of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

Emergency Family Assistance Center

Every church should be seen as a center of help, love, and support. The church should be in a position to have available food, clothing, household furnishings, etc. to respond to the daily needs of those persons in need. As the church is seen as a helping body with no strings attached, persons in doubt will look to it for its spiritual needs as well.

Mid-Life and Retirement Transition Career Counseling Service

During the life of the church many of its members face painful life role transitions including: (1) decisions about job change, (2) (2) unemployment, and (3) retirement. These major individual and family involved problems bring about much suffering and anxiety.

Most churches have within their membership, business and industrial leaders who can provide career planning, decision-making, and transition counseling. It is during these traumatic times that those persons in trouble need Christian love backed by assistance in the area of their needs.

The church could easily establish a placement counseling committee and with training could be seen as a valuable demonstration of Christ's word.

Career Information Resource Center

A church that is viewed as alive should be able to provide appropriate career planning and decision-making types of materials. The church library should provide those resources that are normally not available in the local schools and adult prepared materials for those persons who do not have such services provided within the community. Of particular importance for the service is that the church can select Christian authored and directed materials to assure that the appropriate information is available at critical times of need within the church. These materials can also serve as a valuable resource for the church's youth and adult education programs.

Career Seminars

The church, in cooperation with the local school, should obtain information on the types of occupations its youth are interested in. When data are analyzed, a Christian-led and focused-seminar(s) should be planned (youth and adults) and conducted on an annual basis. The major difference between a church directed or a school directed career seminar would be:

1. All speakers would be Christians and could put the job in a proper life role perspective.
2. Church-related occupations would be presented.
3. Sessions for parents on their roles and responsibilities as youth counselors could be provided.
4. Weekly follow-through with the individual utilizing the resource center and other educational and counseling opportunities could be provided.

Societal Understanding Clinics

Youth and adult education classes and seminars could be established. They would cover current environmental issues and factors and their implications as they might affect a Christian's personal health, family unit, mission of the church, and need for outreach.

Example: The need for crisis church outreach related to tragedies such as floods, tornadoes, fire, energy crisis, etc.

Putting Discipleship into Perspective Seminars

Instructional programs for youth and adults related to putting into a Christian perspective the priority importance of certain life roles that they assumed could be established. This orientation would serve to help individuals to de-emphasize life roles such as work or leisure if heavy time consumption or anxiety places an unhealthy burden on their family or church responsibilities.

Family Travel Activities

Travel with the family provides many opportunities for career development experiences. A Christian-focused career development travel activity could be a unique approach for gaining parent involvement in providing Christian learning opportunities for their children.

Gaming could be used on short and long distance rides, roadside stops, overnight stops, etc. For best effect pre-travel planning materials need to be available from the church. Suggestions for topics--outdoor scenes are as follows:

ISSUES	SCENE
1. Christians at work--what effect can they have	All buildings, vehicles, individuals, billboards, etc. seen from car
2. Advertising slogans--their implications	Billboards, trucks, etc.
3. Predict weather-who's in control and reasons for weather	All signs of future or past storms
4. List variety of trees, flowers, animals-reasons for their presence	Parks, roadside, etc.
5. Guess what is in a truck-who made it, why, who will use, results, etc.	Trucks--reading the advertising on their sides

Parent Training Night at the Church Library

This home-centered career education preparation program with the aid of the church's paraprofessional career counselors can provide the following:

1. Opportunity for parents to fully understand the use of the library and how to use such materials with their children.
2. Opportunity for parents to more fully appreciate the individual skills, abilities, and needs of their youth and to open avenues of self-fulfillment in the home.
3. Preparation to more fully share in parent/youth learning experiences.

Parent Discussion Groups

Parent discussion groups within the church can be formed for developing concepts and skill building necessary to facilitate the positive growth of their sons'/daughters' career development. Two types of discussion groups could be structured: (1) unstructured where discussions are open-ended and (2) structured using trained leaders who cover specific pre-assigned topics. Skills-oriented parent discussion groups are based on the belief that parents can learn behaviors that will help in the total development of their children.

The following are some topics that could serve for both formal and informal sessions:

1. Communication between parent and groups
2. Listening skills
3. Test/inventory interpretation
4. Leisure activities--relationship to life roles
5. Life role decision-making and its Christian perspective
6. Child rearing practices
7. Educational decision-making--Is it necessary for your vocation
8. Work within the church--What's your share
9. Christian influence in the work place
10. What does a Christian look like/act like in the work place?
11. Christ based self confidence

Home Centered-Problem Solving

In any home setting, conflict will result based on adult/youth opinions about current issues and ideas. Most of us know that such issues affect the individual's personality, emotions become involved and conflicts can become troublesome and disturbing to the entire family.

There are numerous methods which parents can employ to recognize and deal with such problems from a Christian perspective in their family life. The objective here is to involve the

whole family in problem-solving methods, i.e., (1) identification of problem, (2) confrontation, and (3) developing personal responsibility for discovering solutions satisfactory to all concerned.

Christ has always taught us through his word that we need to deal with conflict resolution through increased acceptance of differences among family members and others and the appreciation of the variations in ideas which exist among individuals and groups.

Career Counseling Aid Program

Selection: Individuals who are interested in career counseling, and in youth and/or adults, are willing to spend necessary time and effort to make sure they grasp the real meaning of Christian vocation and are able to transmit same to counselees, should be selected as counselors. The church normally has teachers, personnel and public relations workers, professionals in business and industry, sales people, real estate and insurance (professionals) as well as many talented housewives and retired personnel from which to select.

Preparation: There are numerous kits and resources that exist for such training. The workbook-textbook, *Where Do I Go From Here? Work, Worship, Leisure,* 1972, is one good source to examine the criteria for occupational choice in the context of a Christian understanding of vocation. The church should also draw upon local universities and local schools for assistance from professional personnel.

Promotion: The paper, youth groups, adult groups, bulletin boards, parish newsletters, Sunday bulletins, special meetings, radio and television programs, local newspaper and other communication aids could be used to announce the availability and effects of the counseling program.

Operation: The workbook text, *Where Do I Go From Here?, Work, Worship, Leisure,* (Winn and Cockrum) can be adapted to various styles of counseling-study including one-to-one sessions, youth fellowship group over period of at least a quarter, parent-youth family study sessions (min. 10 hours) to involve family in working on:

1. The World and Work
2. Understanding Who You Are
3. Interest and Abilities
4. The Work World
5. Preparing for Work (General Education and College)
6. Life and Dialogue: Vocation...Work...Leisure

Work Experience

The church should encourage its youth to visit a variety of work settings where church members are engaged in work on a parttime, summer, or longer-term appointment. While receiving valuable work-related observation and experience they will also note how Christians cope and adjust in the work place.

Talent Search

All churches have a wealth of resources that can be shared with the church community as well as with community in general.

As an ongoing basis churches need to conduct an information assessment on all youth and adults. This assessment should include such items as:

1. Interests
2. Occupation
3. Civic Association Activities
4. Hobbies
5. Special talents
6. Expressions of how they would like to be involved in the church
7. Experiences
8. Needs (individual and those projected of others)
9. Handicaps
10. Resources available (non $)

Such data should be placed on an easy to access system (McBee Hand Card Sort) so that information can be assessed immediately when it is needed. All new members should be asked to complete a form and old members requested to update their records every two years.

To Be A Missionary--A Reality

Feucht, 1974, suggests that "the church must abandon its stained-glass sanctuaries and take the gospel out into the streets."

Many of us have had dreams about spending time (away from our job/vocation) devoting special attention to the city, state, national or international missior related needs.

It is suggested that a church should plan for a sabbatic fund to allow a number of persons to fulfill their dream. The concept of the Peace Corps or Short Term Service program could be adopted by every church. Besides the enriched experiences encountered by the individual and/or their family, these persons can carry this experience back to their church membership in a wide variety of ways. Such demonstration of Christian unselfish love will provide a rich new energy to a parish.

Daily Preparation for Job Environment

Many or all of us need a boost and encouragement to face the various problems or issues that face us at work. Many churches have developed morning breakfasts, and prayer and discussion groups on a one-day-a-week basis to provide both ideas, support and encouragement for those who project facing problems in their family or work life role.

The principal of such peer counseling and discussion sessions is to:

1. Project problems of the week
2. Discuss optional ways of dealing with issues
3. Place life role problems in a Christian perspective
4. Review individual attempts to deal with problems
5. Pray for problem resolution

Such groups could meet both in the church or any other community setting. Groups should remain small, 8-12 maximum.

Program Outreach

The church, through a planned needs assessment, should examine its collective talents and resources in respect to the church centered, community, city, state, national and international individual or group needs.

A social outreach committee should be instituted to examine the resources and needs and develop plans for outreach resolutions. Such activities could include:

1. Fatherless or motherless children
2. Adults in need for companionship
3. Suicide prevention
4. Individuals with family without husband or wife
5. Youth in trouble
6. Need of the aged
7. Handicapped
8. State hospital residents
9. Unemployed
10. Orphans
11. Imprisoned
12. Needs of the sick
13. Missions

The church should provide all possible opportunities for all members to participate in some way as individuals and in groups in Christian outreach efforts.

Can You Be A Christian on the Job and Show It

The Bible refers that Christians should be "visible" everyday on the job. This is difficult for most of us because this hasn't been a part of our early Christian training. Many times we hide our faith in our conversation, our language, the spirit and purpose in which we do our work, the fairness and considerateness we express to our fellow workers, those under our employ and those we are responsible to.

The church needs to retrain each of us to be an "on-the-job-worker priest!" We need to gain skills in (1) Christian self confidence, (2) how to verbally demonstrate our Christian faith without turning others off, (3) ability to take job related risks for our faith, and (4) methods of demonstrating our Christian love through interpersonal relationships.

These skills can be taught through a series of seminars, role playing and demonstration workshops, etc.

Differences and Similarities Focused Educational Program

As part of the elementary Christian education program, students should address the issue that we all have been born in the image and likeness of God. This series of self concept and appreciation of others should stress that it is the inner self that is important and not our external appearance e.g.: looks, height, weight, shape, etc. The program should also stress the individuals likes, dislikes, hobbies, friends and why they are, leisure interests, etc. to the realization that while we manifest differences in what we do, we are all viewed the same in the eyes of our Savior.

Lastly, it is important to stress that it takes all of us, no matter how diverse, to make up God's family. Respect and value needs to be associated with all those that we know. The perspective of who the person is, not what they may happen to do on a given time or event, needs to be priority.

Dramatization

All of us desire to demonstrate our beliefs and talents in various ways to our peers and others, but especially our youth. Ways of bonding the youth and youth leaders together through intensive study and work would be:

1. Development of dramatization manuscript
2. Development of dramatization music score
3. Training of actors and singers
4. Dramatizing some aspect of (1) Christ's life, (2) social issues, (3) current events, etc.
5. Presenting dramatization to congregation, community and, state-wide and broader

Through group study, preparation, and performance; youth and adults will both learn how to work together for common goals, how to witness to their fellow man and how to share ones talents. It is suggested that each year the church rally around one or two such events as a special way of social outreach and personal witness.

IV. IN SUMMARY

The Christian parent and pastoral leaders have always been vitally interested in the career plans of the children and adult parish members. As trained counselors, career educators and well executed career education and guidance and counseling programs have become increasingly available, there has been a tendency for the parent and the church to lose the perspective of their role and responsibility. Dr. Wade H. Boggs, Jr. has pointed out in *All Ye Who Labor:*

> Even if a particular public school were financially able to staff its guidance (career education) program so that all the basic services were made available to each pupil, such a program would still be inadequate because of the absence of a Christian philosophy of vocation.

I'm convinced that genuine spiritual revival must await the rediscovery of the Christian significance of daily work and of the role of the world's laity. Each of us, representing the church, can effectively challenge young people to make their Christian faith relevant to the world of work. These assorted ideas on techniques is an attempt to create a curiosity to hopefully bring all of us to action related to "Career Education Through the Church."

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